



BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

PAKISTAN

General Mohammad ZIA-ul-Haq
August 1988

(U) NAME: General (GEN) Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq
(ZEE-ah), Army, Republic of Pakistan, SN 1810.

(U) POSITION: President, since September 1978; and
Chief of Army Staff (COAS), since 1 March 1976.
Addressed as: Mr. President.



(U) 1988

(u) SIGNIFICANCE: Zia currently holds both the top civilian and military positions. General Zia, as Chief of State of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is the third professional soldier to head that nation in its forty-year history. He assumed power in an efficient and bloodless coup and became de facto Prime Minister in July 1977. Zia was succeeded as Prime Minister in March 1985 by Mohammad Khan Junejo.

(u) Zia's current term as President ends in 1990. If he wants another term he would have, according to the Pakistan constitution, had to relinquish his position as Army Chief by March, 1988 in order to allow for the required two year period between the end of his Chief of Army Staff position and that of civilian president. Since he has not elected to relinquish the COAS position, an alternative for Zia would be to alter the present constitution to allow him to run for the office while continuing in the role of Army chief. (The National Assembly can amend the constitution with a 2/3 vote.) In an interview with UPI, Zia said he would step down as COAS by March 1990; and that the purpose for retaining control of the military would be served by 1990 allowing him to hand it over to "the next man".

(u) Most observers believe that President Zia wants to continue in power past 1990. He sees his true source of power emanating from the COAS position, not the presidency.

In a surprise move in the final days of May 1988, Zia dissolved the National Assembly and the Federal Cabinet calling for an election within 90 days. The announcement was a surprise as new elections were not due for another two years. The move by Zia removed Prime Minister Junejo (who also was Minister of Defence) and gives Zia more latitude and freedom in the selection of his choice Army generals. The selection of the Army hierarchy is critical if Zia is to give up the powerful Chief of Army Staff position.

[REDACTED]

PAKISTAN
General Mohammad ZIA-ul-Haq
August 1988

[REDACTED] **POLITICS:** Although some details on General Zia's international views are sketchy, he is considered to be very pro-American, at least privately.

[REDACTED]

Zia has visited the PRC on numerous occasions (1977, 80, 82) and has just temporarily postponed a June 1988 visit.

(U) General Zia is especially close to the rulers of Jordan, having spent two years (1969-1971) as the Senior Pakistani Military Advisor to the Jordanian Army. Zia distrusts Soviet intentions and perceives potential Indo-Soviet collusion as a major threat to Pakistan's security. In addition, he is concerned that Soviet machinations in the Persian Gulf and support for radical Arab countries could weaken the moderate Arab states to which Pakistan traditionally looks for political and financial support. Largely in response to Soviet intentions in the region, Zia has sought closer ties with the US to supplement Pakistan's traditionally close relations with the PRC, even though the US is perceived as historically an unreliable ally.

(U) [REDACTED] In domestic politics, Zia distrusts party politics and would prefer a non-party format for the parliament. By keeping the political parties on the sidelines when a new parliament is formed, Zia keeps the flexibility to name a new prime minister of his choosing, not necessarily the leader of the largest party or group of parties, as likely would be the case if he allowed the parties to take a full role. Following his dissolving of the National Assembly and Federal Cabinet, Zia announced a caretaker government to manage the government until elections are held in November 1988.

(U) [REDACTED] **PERSONAL DATA:** Zia (whose surname Zia-ul-Haq means "Light of God"), was born on 12 August 1924 into a middle-class family in the city of Jullundur, India, and is considered bright, aggressive and competent. Zia is a man of simple tastes. He prefers to live in the modest house in Rawalpindi that he occupied as Chief of Staff, rather than in the more elaborate presidential residence. His continuation in power since 1977 is attributed to his low-key deliberate management style; he is a dispassionate, shrewd and cautious decisionmaker. He is a decisive commander who quickly seizes opportunities; he is a cordial host and a good conversationalist. He quit smoking in 1978 and does not drink. Zia appears to be in excellent health. He speaks fluent English.

(U) Zia and his wife, Shafiq Jahan, have been married for over 30 years. Traditional in their personal life, they are private people who shun the publicity and gossip that have surrounded other Pakistani first families. They are devoted to their five children, especially a young daughter who has a congenital birth defect that was treated at Children's Hospital National Medical Center in Washington in 1979.

[REDACTED]

2

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

August 1988

(U) CAREER: Zia attended St. Steven's College in Delhi. He was first attracted to the Army when he saw a poster depicting an officer in a black beret standing in the turret of a tank. General Zia has been profiled as "a traditional British-inspired Army man"; he is "low-keyed, direct, polite and talks with quiet sincerity about his country's problems". In May 1945, after attending the Indian Military Academy he participated in World War II operations in Southeast Asia with the British Indian Army as an armor officer. During the final months before the Japanese surrender in WW II he served with British forces in Burma, Malaya, and Indonesia. After graduating from the Command Staff College at Quetta in 1955, he received training in the US in 1959, at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and again in 1963 for advanced military training. In 1964, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and appointed instructor at the Command and Staff College, Quetta; during 1965, he saw active duty in Pakistan's armed conflict with India over Kashmir. From 1966 to 1968 Zia was CO of a cavalry regiment; in May 1968, he was promoted to colonel and assigned to an armored division; and in 1969, on attaining the rank of brigadier, he took over the command of an armored brigade. From 1969 to 1971 he was an adviser to the Jordanian Army and was decorated by King Hussein. During Pakistan's 1971 war with India, which resulted in his country's loss of the Eastern Region (that became the independent nation of Bangladesh) he served as a deputy division commander. The following year he was promoted to major general and given command of an armored division. Zia was promoted to lieutenant general in April 1975 and appointed a corps commander.

(U) On March 1, 1976, Zia advanced to the rank of general and was appointed Chief of Staff of the Army. Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had dominated Pakistani politics since taking office as President in late 1971, reportedly appointed Zia to the top Army post over the heads of generals with more seniority, because of his reputation as a professional "soldier of Islam" with only mediocre ability and little political ambition. He would, therefore, place no obstacles in the way of Bhutto's populist rule. Zia has been described as "dumb like a fox," and it has been suggested that "he may have deliberately cultivated his image as inexperienced and indecisive in order to lull potential opponents into underestimating him." As Chief of Staff, Zia banned alcohol in officers messes and tried to instill in his troops the principles of "Iman" (faith), "Taqua" (abstinence), and "Jihad" (readiness to wage holy war).

